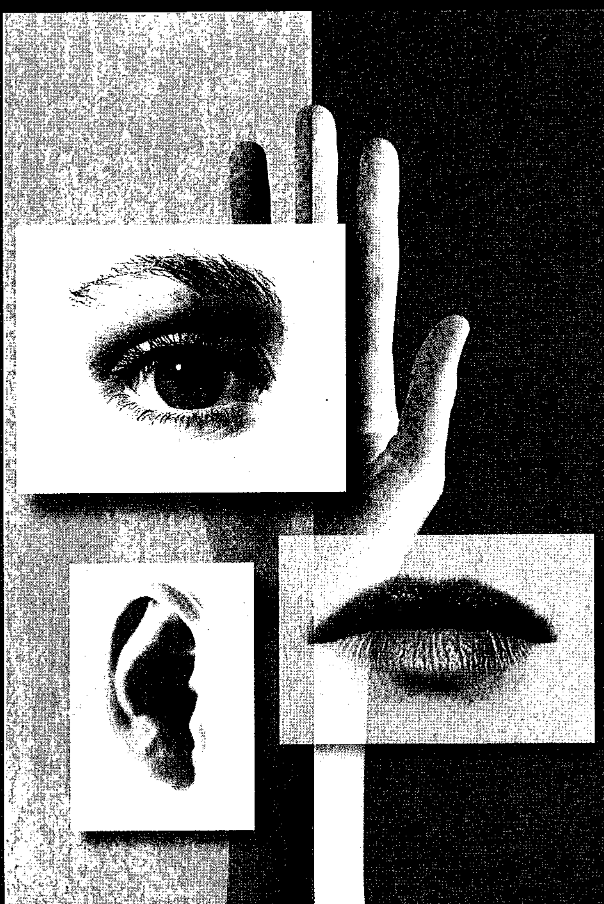
WOMEN DON'T ASK

NEGOTIATION and the GENDER DIVIDE



"This book is an eye opener, a call to arms, and a plan for action."

INTRODUCTION

Women Don't Ask

A few years ago, when Linda was serving as the director of the Ph.D. program at her school, a delegation of women graduate students came to her office. Many of the male graduate students were teaching courses of their own, the women explained, while most of the female graduate students had been assigned to work as teaching assistants to regular faculty. Linda agreed that this didn't sound fair, and that afternoon she asked the associate dean who handled teaching assignments about the women's complaint. She received a simple answer: "I try to find teaching opportunities for any student who approaches me with a good idea for a course, the ability to teach, and a reasonable offer about what it will cost," he explained. "More men ask. The women just don't ask."

The women just don't ask. This incident and the associate dean's explanation suggested to Linda the existence of a more pervasive problem. Could it be that women don't get more of the things they want in life in part because they don't think to ask for them? Are there external pressures that discourage women from asking as much as men do—and even keep them from realizing that they can ask? Are women really less likely than men to ask for what they want?

To explore this question, Linda conducted a study that looked at the starting salaries of students graduating from Carnegie Mellon University with their master's degrees.[1] When Linda looked exclusively at gender, the difference was fairly large: The starting salaries of the men were 7.6 percent or almost $4,000 higher on average than those of the women. Trying to explain this difference, Linda looked next at who had negotiated his or her salary (who had asked for more money) and who had simply accepted the initial offer he or she had received. It turned out that only 7 percent of the female students had negotiated but 57 percent (eight times as many) of the men had asked for more money. Linda was particularly surprised to find such a dramatic difference between men and women at Carnegie Mellon because graduating students are trongly advised by the school's Career Services department to negotiate heir job offers. Nonetheless, hardly any of the women had done so. The most striking finding, however, was that the students who had negotiated (most of them men) were able to increase their starting sala-ies by 7.4 percent on average, or $4,053—almost exactly the difference between men's and women's average starting pay. This suggests that the alary differences between the men and the women might have been liminated if the women had negotiated their offers.

Spurred on by this finding, Linda and two colleagues, Deborah Small nd Michele Gelfand, designed another study to look at the propensity of men and women to ask for more than they are offered.[2] They re-ruited students at Carnegie Mellon for an experiment and told them hat they would be paid between three and ten dollars for playing *Boggle*™, a game by Milton Bradley. In *Boggle*, players shake a cube of ile letters until all the letters fall into a grid at the bottom of the cube. They must then identify words that can be formed from the letters verti-ally, horizontally, or diagonally. Each research subject was asked to lay four rounds of the game, and then an experimenter handed him or er three dollars and said, "Here's three dollars. Is three dollars okay?" If subject asked for more money, the experimenters would pay that articipant ten dollars, but they would not give anyone more money if e or she just complained about the compensation (an indirect method of asking). The results were striking—almost *nine times* as many male s female subjects asked for more money.[3] Both male and female sub-ects rated how well they'd played the game about equally, meaning hat women didn't feel they should be paid less or should accept less ecause they'd played poorly. There were also no gender differences in ow much men and women complained about the compensation (there vas plenty of complaining all around). The significant factor seemed to e that for men, unhappiness with what they were offered was more kely to make them try to fix their unhappiness—by asking for more.

In a much larger study, Linda, Michele Gelfand, Deborah Small, and nother colleague, Heidi Stayn, conducted a survey of several hundred eople with access to the Internet (subjects were paid ten dollars to log n to a website and answer a series of questions).[4] The survey asked espondents about the most recent negotiations they'd attempted or nitiated (as opposed to negotiations they'd participated in that had een prompted or initiated by others). For the men, the most recent egotiation they'd initiated themselves had occurred two weeks earlier n average, while for the women the most recent negotiation they'd

initiated had occurred a full month before. Averages for the second-most-recent negotiations attempted or initiated were about seven weeks earlier for men and twenty-four weeks earlier for women.

These results suggest that men are asking for things they want and initiating negotiations much more often than women—two to three times as often.[5] Linda and her colleagues wanted to be sure that this discrepancy was not produced simply by memory lapses, however, so the survey also asked people about the *next* negotiation they planned to initiate. In keeping with the earlier findings, the negotiations planned by the women were much further in the future than those being planned by the men—one month ahead for the women but only one week ahead for the men. This means that men may be initiating *four* times as many negotiations as women. The sheer magnitude of this difference is dramatic, especially since respondents to the survey included people of all ages, from a wide range of professions, and with varied levels of education. It confirms that men really do take a more active approach than women to getting what they want by asking for it.

The more than 100 interviews we conducted in the process of writing this book—with men and women from a range of professions (including full-time mothers) and from Britain and Europe as well as the United States—supported these findings.[6] When asked to identify the last negotiation in which they had participated, the majority of the women we talked to named an event several months in the past and described a recognized type of structured negotiation, such as buying a car. (The exceptions were women with small children, who uniformly said, "I negotiate with my kids all the time.") The majority of the men described an event that had occurred within the preceding week, and frequently identified more informal transactions, such as negotiating with a spouse over who would take the kids to soccer practice, with a boss to pay for a larger-size rental car because of a strained back, or with a colleague about which parts of a joint project each team member would undertake. Men were also more likely to mention more ambiguous situations—situations that could be construed as negotiations but might not be by many people. For the most part, the men we talked to saw negotiation as a bigger part of their lives and a more common event than the women did.

One particularly striking aspect of our findings was how they broke down by age. The changes brought about by the women's movement over the last 40 years had led us to expect greater differences between older men and women than between their younger counterparts. And ıdeed when we discussed the ideas in the book with younger women ıey often suggested that the problems we were studying were "boomer" roblems, afflicting older women but not themselves. To our surprise, owever, when we looked exclusively at respondents to the web survey ʼho were in their twenties and early thirties, the gender differences in ow often they initiated negotiations were similar to or slightly *larger* ıan the differences in older cohorts (with men attempting many more egotiations than women).[7] In addition, both the starting salary study nd the *Boggle* study used subjects who were in their twenties. This ersuaded us that the tendency among women to accept what they're ffered and not ask for more is far from just a "boomer" problem.

The Asking Advantage

ut just because women don't ask for things as often as men do, is that ecessarily a problem? Perhaps directly negotiating for advantage—askıg for what you want—is a male strategy and women simply employ ther equally effective strategies to get what they want. This is an imortant point, but only partly accurate. Women often worry more than ıen about the impact their actions will have on their relationships. his can prompt them to change their behavior to protect personal onnections, sometimes by asking for things indirectly, sometimes by sking for less than they really want, and sometimes simply by trying) be more deserving of what they want (say, by working harder) so ıey'll be given what they want without asking. Women also frequently ıke a more collaborative approach to problem-solving than men take, ying to find solutions that benefit both parties or trying to align their wn requests with shared goals. In many situations, women's methods an be superior to those typically employed by men (we explore the dvantages of women's different approaches and styles in the last chapr of the book). Unfortunately, however, in our largely male-defined ork culture, women's strategies can often be misinterpreted and can ave them operating from a position of weakness. And in many cases, ıe only way to get something is to ask for it directly.

So let's look at the importance of asking.

First, consider the situation of the graduating students at Carnegie Iellon, in which eight times as many men as women negotiated their arting salaries. The women who did not negotiate started out not just ehind their male peers, but behind where they could and should have

been. With every future raise predicated on this starting point, they could be paying for this error for a long time—perhaps for the rest of their careers.

Liliane, now 46, is an electrical engineer and a successful software designer in New England's competitive high-tech industry. Although she earned excellent grades in college, she was so insecure when she started out in her field that she felt she didn't even deserve to be interviewed for an engineering job—she was only "faking it." Despite her doubts, she quickly received an offer from a highly regarded company. When the company's personnel manager asked her what kind of salary she was looking for, she said, "I don't care what you pay me as long as you give me a job." A big smile spread across the personnel manager's face, she remembers. She later learned that he gave her the absolute bottom of the range for her position, which was 10 to 20 percent less than her peers were earning. It took her ten years to fix this inequity, and she only did so, finally, by changing jobs.

Quantifying—in terms of dollars and cents—the loss to Liliane and women like her from not negotiating their salaries produces sobering results. Take the following example. Suppose that at age 22 an equally qualified man and woman receive job offers for $25,000 a year. The man negotiates and gets his offer raised to $30,000. The woman does not negotiate and accepts the job for $25,000. Even if each of them receives identical 3 percent raises every year throughout their careers (which is unlikely, given their different propensity to negotiate and other research showing that women's achievements tend to be undervalued), by the time they reach age 60 the gap between their salaries will have widened to more than $15,000 a year, with the man earning $92,243 and the woman only $76,870. While that may not seem like an enormous spread, remember that the man will have been making more all along, with his extra earnings over the 38 years totaling $361,171. If the man had simply banked the difference every year in a savings account earning 3 percent interest, by age 60 he would have $568,834 more than the woman—enough to underwrite a comfortable retirement nest egg, purchase a second home, or pay for the college education of a few children. This is an enormous "return on investment" for a *one-time* negotiation. It can mean a higher standard of living throughout one's working years, financial security in old age, or a topflight education for one's kids.

The impact of neglecting to negotiate in this one instance—when starting a new job—is so substantial and difficult to overcome that some searchers who study the persistence of the wage gap between men ıd women speculate that much of the disparity can be traced to differıces in entering salaries rather than differences in raises.[8]

Another estimate of a woman's potential lost earnings from not negoıting appears in the book *Get Paid What You're Worth* by two profesırs of management, Robin L. Pinkley and Gregory B. Northcraft. They ıtimate that a woman who routinely negotiates her salary increases will ırn over one million dollars more by the time she retires than a woman ho accepts what she's offered every time without asking for more. And ıat figure doesn't include the interest on the extra amount earned.[9] ven in such a small matter as the *Boggle* experiment, the gains to asking ere great. Everyone who asked for more money received ten dollars, ore than three times as much as those who didn't ask and received ıly three dollars.

We all know that few employers will pay us any more than they need . They're prepared to spend extra to get an applicant they want, but ıppy to pay less if they can. Assuming applicants will negotiate, they ıutinely offer less than they're able to pay.[10] But if we fail to ask for ore, it's a rare employer who will insist that we're not being paid ıough. A recent study shows that this is true even at institutions with committed policy against discriminating between men and women. his study describes a man and a woman with equivalent credentials ho were offered assistant professorships by the same large university. ıortly after the two were hired, a male administrator noticed that the an's salary was significantly higher than the woman's. Looking into he learned that both were offered the same starting salary. The man egotiated for more, but the woman accepted what she was offered. ıtisfied, the administrator let the matter drop. He didn't try to adjust ıe discrepancy or alert the female professor to her mistake. The univerty was saving money and enjoying the benefits of a talented woman's ırd work and expertise. He didn't see the long-term damage to his stitution and to society from not correcting such inequities (which e explore later in the book), and she didn't know how much she had crificed by not negotiating the offer she'd received.[11]

Other new research emphasizes how important asking can be. Deeık Malhotra, who is now a professor at the Harvard Business School, ısigned every student in a negotiation class he was teaching at the ellogg School of Management to "go negotiate something in the real orld." The students were then asked to write a report about what had ıppened. All of the students were part-timers who worked during the ıy and took classes at night. Of the 45 students in the class, 35 negoti-

ated something for themselves (the purchase of an antique, the rental fee for an apartment, the salary for a job) and ten negotiated something on behalf of an employer (a contract with a consultant or supplier, a work agreement with a client). The median amount of money saved by the students who negotiated something for themselves was $2,200. The median amount saved by those who negotiated something for their employers was $390,000 (and these are just the medians; some people saved much more). More significant than the amounts saved, however, was the answer the students gave when asked to name the most important tactic that enabled them to achieve such extraordinary results: "Choosing to negotiate at all." They reported that the biggest benefit of completing the exercise was learning that they could negotiate for things (such as rental fees) that they never knew were negotiable.[12]

Because Molehills Become Mountains

We've demonstrated how negotiating your starting salary for your first job can produce a gain of more than a half-million dollars by the end of your career. This one example illustrates a truth that has become better understood in recent years—that even small initial differences can quickly turn into big discrepancies over time. As a result, the cumulative effects of the gender gap in asking can be enormous. In the realm of social equity, small inequalities between men and women, between racial groups, or between heterosexuals and homosexuals have been shown to accumulate rapidly and dramatically to one group's advantage and the other's disadvantage.

To illustrate this phenomenon, three psychologists, Richard Martell, David Lane, and Cynthia Emrich, looked at what would happen if men in an organization consistently received slightly higher performance evaluations than women.[13] (In chapter 4 we explore the dynamics of how this can occur even when there are no real differences in performance or productivity.) The researchers constructed a hypothetical "pyramid structure" organization, in which many people labor at the bottom levels of the organization and successively fewer people are promoted upward to the organization's top levels. In this type of organization, people with the highest performance evaluations tend to be promoted more quickly from lower levels to higher ones. They also tend to go further—to get promoted higher up the ladders of responsibility and power than people with lower evaluations. The researchers noted that even when differences in the performance evaluations awarded to men and women were miniscule (as low as 1 percent), and men and women started out in identical positions in the organization, it didn't take long before the overwhelming majority of people at the highest levels were men.

This is what sociologists call "accumulation of disadvantage." As the psychologist Virginia Valian writes in her book *Why So Slow: The Advancement of Women*: "It is unfair to neglect even minor instances of group-based bias, because they add up to major inequalities."[14] The bottom line is that even if women were asking for comparable things and were equally successful at getting what they ask for when they *do* ask, this simple difference in the "asking propensity" of men and women would inevitably lead to men having more opportunities and accumulating more resources. But women don't ask for comparable things—they ask for less when they do ask, and they usually get less, too. The net result is a huge imbalance in the distribution of resources and opportunities between men and women. Because women ask for what they want less often than men do, and therefore get what they want much less of the time, the inequities in our society, and all the problems they create, continue to pile up. Or, as Virginia Valian has written, "molehills become mountains."[15]

More than Money

The penalties for not negotiating extend far beyond the merely monetary, too. As Pinkley and Northcraft demonstrate,

> Applicants with identical experience and performance records but different salary histories are rated differently by employers. If your compensation record is better than others, employers will assume that your performance is better too. . . . Accepting less will imply that you have less value than other new hires.[16]

In many cases, employers actually respect candidates more for pushing to get paid what they're worth. This means that women don't merely sacrifice additional income when they don't push to be paid more, they may sacrifice some of their employers' regard too. The experience of Hope, a business school professor, tells this story clearly. When she completed graduate school, Hope was offered a job at a prestigious management consulting firm. Not wanting to "start off on the wrong foot," she accepted the firm's initial salary offer without asking for more.

Although she feared that negotiating her salary would damage her new bosses' impression of her, the opposite occurred: She later learned that her failure to negotiate almost convinced the senior management team that they'd made a mistake in hiring her.

Similarly, Ellen, 44, a senior partner at a large law firm, was checking the references of an experienced paralegal named Lucy whom she wanted to hire. One of Lucy's former supervisors described a long list of Lucy's strengths and recommended her highly. But when Ellen asked about Lucy's weaknesses, the supervisor said that Lucy could be more assertive. Ellen asked if she meant Lucy needed to be more assertive on behalf of the firm's clients. The supervisor said no, Lucy was terrific at tracking down any information that could benefit a client's case. What she meant, the supervisor explained, was that Lucy needed to be more assertive on her own behalf. "She could be a lot more assertive when it comes to her own professional needs and rewards," the woman explained. This supervisor felt that not asking for more on her own behalf was a professional weakness in Lucy—and a serious enough weakness that she mentioned it when providing an otherwise glowing reference.

Women also make sacrifices in their personal lives by not asking for what they need more of the time. Miriam, 46, an architect, is also married to an architect. But whereas her husband works for an internationally known firm and travels regularly for his job, Miriam works for herself. And because they have two children, she restricts herself to residential projects in her home state. When her children were small, her husband was out of town two to five days a week, and she was taking care of the children pretty much by herself. Although she enjoyed a lot of artistic freedom in her work and built up a successful practice constructing two- and three-million-dollar houses (houses that won awards and were featured in design magazines), the demands of her family life felt crushing. "I just felt like this is the way that life is for me and there is not anything that I can do about this." Now she wonders "if there would have been ways of asking for more help" instead of "working and working until I fell apart." The problem was that "asking didn't really seem like a possibility, but I'm sure that it was."

Missing the Chance

Besides not realizing that asking is possible, many women avoid negotiating even in situations in which they know that negotiation is approriate and expected (like the female students in the starting salary tudy). In another one of Linda's studies, 20 percent of the women olled said that they never negotiate at all.[17] Although this seems unikely (perhaps these women think of their negotiations as something lse, such as "problem-solving" or "compromising" or even "going along o get along"), their statement conveys a strong antipathy toward negotiting among a huge number of women. (In the United States alone, 20 ercent of the female adult population equals 22 million people.)

That many women feel uncomfortable using negotiation to advance heir interests—and feel more uncomfortable on average than men—vas confirmed by a section of Linda's Internet survey. This part of the urvey asked respondents to consider various scenarios and indicate vhether they thought negotiation would be appropriate in the situaions described. In situations in which they thought negotiation was ppropriate, respondents were also asked to report how likely they vould be to negotiate in that situation. Particularly around work scenaros, such as thinking they were due for a promotion or a salary increase, vomen as a group were less likely to try to negotiate than men—even hough they recognized that negotiation was appropriate and probably even necessary.[18]

These findings are momentous because until now research on negotiition has mostly ignored the issue of when and why people attempt to negotiate, focusing instead on tactics that are successful once a negotiaion is underway—what kinds of offers to make, when to concede, and which strategies are most effective in different types of negotiations.[19] With few exceptions, researchers have ignored the crucial fact that the most important step in any negotiation process must be deciding to negotiate in the first place.[20] Asking for what you want is the essential first step that "kicks off" a negotiation. If you miss your chance to negoiate, the best negotiation advice in the world isn't going to help you much. And women simply aren't "asking" at the same rate as men.

A New Perspective

Our goal in this book is to explore the causes of this difference between men and women, using "asking" as a lens through which to examine how women negotiate life in the broadest sense. In the following pages, we will examine why many women often don't realize that change is possible—why they don't know that they *can* ask. We will look at the

social forces that school women, from the time they are very young, to focus on the needs of others rather than on their own needs. And we will show how our shared assumptions, as a society, about what constitutes appropriate female behavior can act as a kind of psychological straitjacket when a woman wants to assert her own wishes and desires.

Despite recent gains made by women in many realms and the comparative openness of Western democracies to progress, our society still perpetuates rigid gender-based standards for behavior—standards that require women to behave modestly and unselfishly and to avoid promoting their own self-interest. New generations of children are taught to abide by and internalize these standards, making them less likely as adults to rebel against these common beliefs. In addition, women who do rebel against these standards by pushing more overtly on their own behalf often risk being punished. Sometimes they're called "pushy" or "bitchy" or "difficult to work with." Sometimes their skills and contributions are undervalued and they're passed over for promotions they deserve. Other times, they're left out of information-sharing networks. Experiencing this treatment themselves or seeing other women treated this way, many women struggle with intense anxiety when they consider asking for something they want—anxiety that can deter them from asking at all or interfere with their ability to ask well.

In addition, even when women do negotiate, they often get less than a man in the same situation might get. Sometimes this happens because women set less aggressive goals going into their negotiations than men set and sometimes it happens because both men and women in our society typically take a harder line against women than they take against men in a negotiation. They make worse first offers to women, pressure women to concede more, and themselves concede much less. This doesn't simply limit the results women produce when they do negotiate. If the benefits from negotiating are likely to be small and the process promises to be difficult, many women feel less incentive to ask in the first place.

By exposing the social forces that constrain women from promoting their own interests and limit them from getting more when they try, we hope to make it easier for women to do things differently. We're convinced that for behavior to change women must understand, at a very deep level, the forces that shape their beliefs, attitudes, and impulses. Simply telling women what they should do differently without helping them understand the root causes of their behavior will make women feel anxious and inadequate, we suspect, but won't help them achieve neaningful change. So in the pages that follow we explore the many :auses and ramifications of this newly recognized problem.

Working from this foundation, we also describe in every chapter vays in which women can resist and even retool their early social training, reframe their interactions with others, and overcome the low sense of entitlement, fear, or extreme caution that can keep them from taking ull advantage of their talents. We don't mean to imply that this problem ias a simple solution, however—that women just need to wake up and isk for things more of the time and the problem will go away. Women end to hesitate before asking for what they want not because of a silly olind spot that's entirely their own responsibility but because they are aught early on that pushing on their own behalf is unfeminine, unattractive, and unwelcome—not to mention ineffective.

So we want to be clear: This book is not simply a study of an inexplicable female failing that can easily be corrected. It is not about ways in which women need to "fix" themselves. It is an examination of how our culture—modern Western culture—strongly discourages women from asking for what they want. (The situations of women in other parts of the world bear many similarities to those of women in the West, but they're beyond the scope of this book). We hope it will help individual women improve their circumstances and increase their happiness. But even more, we hope it will provoke social change on a larger scale by inspiring everyone—in the workforce and at home—to think differently about how women can and should behave. To this end, we also include suggestions for how managers in the workplace and adults both at work and at home can change their behavior toward the women around them. Until society accepts that it is a good thing for women to promote their own interests and negotiate on their own behalf, women will continue to find it difficult to pursue their dreams and ambitions in straightforward and effective ways. And we'll show that preventing women from doing so involves substantial social and economic costs for us all.

Affirming the Right to Ask

Can women learn to recognize more hidden opportunities in their circumstances—and can the world learn to accept women who ask? Can women overcome their anxiety and find effective ways to negotiate—and can people stop taking a harder line when they negotiate with

women? Luckily, the answer to all of these questions is yes. Recognizing more opportunities for negotiation in your circumstances is a skill that can be learned—in many cases quite easily. In the three years we spent writing this book, we discussed our ideas with many women who went out and applied them in their lives, with dramatic results (many of their stories appear in the chapters that follow). Research also shows that certain kinds of training can help women become more effective negotiators (and can substantially decrease their anxiety) by increasing their sense of control over the negotiation process and teaching them to anticipate roadblocks, plan countermoves, and resist conceding too much or too soon. Rather than merely imitating men (which often doesn't work), women can learn to ask *as women*. They can find their own "negotiating voices," develop more ambitious goals—and get good results.

Society can also change. Malcolm Gladwell, in his book *The Tipping Point*, describes how New York City dramatically reduced its crime rate in a very short time by making crime seem less permissible in the streets of New York. The city did this by cleaning up those streets—eradicating graffiti, replacing broken windows, removing garbage—and by cracking down on even the most minor crimes, such as fare-jumping in the subways. Through these seemingly small changes, the city was able to achieve a profound cultural shift: It was able to change people's behavior. People with the same deprived backgrounds or bad motives—whatever drives people into crime—stopped committing criminal acts simply because small changes in their environment signaled that such behavior was no longer appropriate there. As Gladwell writes, "We like to think of ourselves as autonomous and inner-directed, that who we are and how we act is something permanently set by our genes and our temperament."[21] Instead, he shows, "We are actually powerfully influenced by our surroundings, our immediate context, and the personalities of those around us."[22]

Similarly, changing the context and the cultural environment in which women live and work can change the behavior of the people who live and work with them, making certain ways of responding to women seem less permissible. This type of change can be achieved by a few people in a group consciously deciding to treat men and women more equally—and by their example influencing the behavior and beliefs of others. It can be achieved by men in positions of power making a commitment to mentoring talented women. It can be achieved by a lot of people paying closer attention to the different ways in which they treat men and women and raise their male and female children.

Gladwell calls rapid, large-scale social changes (such as the crime reduction in New York) social "epidemics." As *The Tipping Point* demonstrates, epidemics of social change are rarely the result of a single, unified effort by millions of people. Because subtle adjustments in their circumstances can strongly influence people's beliefs and behavior, even small changes sometimes have a "multiplier" effect. Or, as Gladwell writes, "big changes follow from small events."[23] We hope this book will prompt an epidemic of small changes and lead to a genuine loosening of the constraints that bind women.

This is not to say that change on a larger scale is not possible as well. One organization, the international accounting and consulting firm of Deloitte and Touche, which employs about 29,000 people in the United States and a total of 95,000 worldwide, has already demonstrated that with hard work and commitment large-scale cultural change is also possible. In 1991, Deloitte and Touche decided that it had a problem concerning women. Only 5 percent of the firm's partners were women, and even though it had been hiring large numbers of women since 1980, by 1991 only 8 percent of the new candidates for partner were female.[24] A task force formed to look into the problem discovered that so few women were coming up for partnerships because most of them were leaving before they qualified for partner. The average annual turnover rate among female managers was huge: 33 percent. The task force also calculated that every percentage point in turnover translated into an estimated 13 million dollars for costs such as recruitment, hiring bonuses, and training. Although the members of the task force assumed that women were leaving Deloitte and Touche to stay home and have children, they quickly learned that this was not the case. Women were not leaving to stay home but were moving to other firms. When polled, women cited Deloitte and Touche's male-dominated culture as a big reason for leaving: The company was just not a comfortable place for women to work. The task force also found that within the firm, both men and women wanted the freedom to balance work and family better. No one wanted what was then the standard 80-hour work week.

The task force set about fixing these problems by conducting a series of workshops—attended by more than five thousand people in groups of 24—to talk about gender issues in the workplace. As a way for them to identify common assumptions made about women in the workplace, the teams were given scenarios to discuss. For example, in one, a man and a woman both came late to a meeting. Although the team members ignored the man's tardiness, they automatically assumed that the

woman was having child-care problems. In discussing the impact of this discrepancy in their responses, the team members realized that assumptions like this can negatively influence how a woman is evaluated. This led them to look more closely at how men and women at the firm were evaluated, and they discovered that men were typically evaluated on their "potential" while women were more commonly evaluated on their performance. The net result was that men were being promoted much faster than women. Other common practices looked at by the teams included a firmwide tendency to give men and women different work assignments (which make a big difference in who advances) based on unexamined and often unfounded assumptions. These included assuming that women wouldn't be comfortable in manufacturing environments or that women wouldn't want to travel too much—the latter a particularly career-damaging assumption at a company that relies heavily on travel to serve its clients.

Once people at Deloitte and Touche started looking at their assumptions about men and women, they began to see the implications of their beliefs—and how they made the atmosphere at the firm inhospitable to women and limited their advancement. The next step was to make changes. Prompted by the task force, all the firm's offices were required to produce annual reviews documenting how well women were progressing through their portion of the organization. They were also required to track the number of women recruited and retained by each office, and these numbers were widely circulated across offices. This basic accountability changed the way assignments were made and evaluations determined. Individual offices also started networking events and career-planning programs especially for women. Firmwide, the requirements for travel were changed, lessening the time that everyone—both men and women—was expected to be away from the office. The company also advertised that taking advantage of flexible work arrangements wouldn't hinder one's professional advancement within the organization. This dramatically increased the use of these programs by men as well as women.

By the year 2000, the number of female partners at Deloitte and Touche had almost tripled, from 5 to 14 percent—a huge gain in nine years. The firm had also eliminated the gender gap in turnover (now about 18 percent annually for both men and women), and saved close to $250 million in hiring and training costs. Particularly heartening about this story is the evidence that the changes at Deloitte and Touche benefited both men and women—women because they could stay at the company, enjoy working there more, and advance at a better pace, and men because they too could take advantage of flexible work arrangements, reduced travel loads, and a more supportive work environment without negative repercussions. And the bottom line is that rather than costing money, the company actually saved millions of dollars—and stopped hemorrhaging talented people.[25] Building on this success, the company is pushing toward even more ambitious goals by 2005.

The experience of this one far-sighted company provides a wonderful model for how the rest of us, with a little commitment and persistent focus, can change our world. Gender equality, with the benefits it can bring to all of us, our sons as well as our daughters, will not be attainable unless our society has the courage, the resolve, and—perhaps most important—the information and the insight to make across-the-board changes. Harvard Business School professor Rosabeth Moss Kanter explains it this way:

> Individual trickle-up is not enough. . . . The whole social system must be changed if women in general, not just a hardy, pioneering few, are to gain economic power. The apparent openness of American society to the overachiever from an underprivileged minority group who can pull herself up by the pantyhose and succeed makes it too easy to assume that the problems and solutions are all individual ones. It makes it easy for those in power to point to the token overachiever as an example.[26]

In other words, just because a few women manage to succeed despite the impediments our society erects in their paths doesn't mean that these impediments don't exist or that there's no problem. Kanter also says that "a vision of what is possible, a source of hope and inspiration, is the necessary ingredient for energizing change."[27] We hope that this book, by shining a spotlight on the barriers that prevent women from asking for what they want—and suggesting ways for those barriers to be removed—will play a part in providing that vision of what is possible.

deserve. Change of this sort is not only possible, it's necessary—because another reason women don't resist the constraints of gender roles and stereotypes involves the consequences for violating those expectations. As our culture currently functions, women sometimes find themselves punished for behaving in ways that go against prevailing gender norms. Promoting their own interests by asking for what they want may be one of those ways. We explore this last reason in depth in the next chapter.

4

Scaring the Boys

In the late 1990s, Jean Hollands, founder of an executive coaching firm in California called the Growth and Leadership Center, recognized a new need in her field: Someone had to teach tough, capable women in business to tone down their act. Women with enormous passion for their jobs and little tolerance for incompetence were intimidating their subordinates, coworkers, and even their bosses. As a result, these women's careers were stalling. A "tough" personal style, often an advantage for men in business, had emerged as a liability for ambitious women.[1]

In response, Jean Hollands started the "Bully Broads" program, which charges around $18,000 (almost always paid by a woman's employer) to "modify" or "reform" tough women by teaching them how to be "nicer."[2] Does she acknowledge that there's a double standard? Absolutely. "Many of the things these women do would not be as inappropriate in a man," Ms. Hollands says.[3] Her son-in-law, Ron Steck, a vice president of the Growth and Leadership Center, goes further: "With a male executive, there's no expectation to be nice. He has more permission to be an ass. But when women speak their minds, they're seen as harsh."[4] To counteract this impression, Bully Broads teaches these women to speak more slowly and softly, hesitate or stammer when presenting their ideas, use self-deprecating humor, and even allow themselves to cry at meetings. They need to "become ladies first," Hollands says; they also need to appear vulnerable and use what she calls "foreplay"—elaborate apologies and explanations to soften bad news or unwelcome directives.[5]

How big a "problem" is women's overly tough behavior? Whereas the majority of the men who go to the Growth and Leadership Center are sent by their companies to learn how to delegate work or handle stress better, a full 95 percent of the women are sent because their firms say their coworkers find them scary. This doesn't mean that the world is suddenly being overrun by bitchy women. It means that an assertive personal style can be a gender-norm violation for a woman. As the psychologist Roberta Nutt, former chair of the Psychology of Women Division of the American Psychological Association, noted, "When women first entered the workplace they often tried to do things like men, but it didn't work. We don't accept from women what we do from men."[6] This is true of objectively aggressive and dominant types of behavior, such as pointing at others, speaking with a stern expression on one's face, and making verbal and nonverbal threats.[7] It is also true of nonverbal behavior that could be seen to express a dominant attitude, such as making a lot of eye contact while speaking.[8] Sadly, it has even been shown to be true of behavior that could be characterized as simply assertive and self-confident, such as speaking without the use of disclaimers, tag questions ("don't you agree?"), and hedges ("I'm not sure this will work, but it might be worth trying").[9] It can be true of simply disagreeing with another person as well—we accept this behavior from a man much more readily than we do from a woman.[10]

Unfortunately, many of these behaviors can be effective in a negotiation—but they carry risks for women. Marti, 28, who worked on sound design for toys at a recording studio and is now the registrar of a theater company and acting school, told us that she learned pretty early "that if a woman picks that hard-edged negotiation style she can often . . . come across as a bitch to people. And, still, I think, society looks at a woman who is a successful businesswoman and a successful negotiator, and somehow looks down upon her because she's not as soft as she's supposed to be."

Gender norms limit the behavior of men, too, of course: Men aren't free to cry or show weakness in most situations, for example. It isn't, therefore, just that women must be more concerned than men about creating a good impression: It's that particularly in the realm of negotiating, women's behavior is more rigidly restricted than men's. And an extensive body of research has found clear evidence that when women stray—or stride—across those boundaries they face penalties (what social scientists call "social sanctions") for violating society's expectations for their behavior. These penalties can range from resentment for "acting like men"[11] to a devaluing of their skills and job effectiveness[12] to outright hostility and censure.[13] Their fear of these penalties makes many women hesitate to pursue their goals too directly. It can also be a major cause of anxiety for women when they need to negotiate on their own behalf because they've learned that by doing so they risk being punished in both subtle and overt ways. (Being sent to Bully Broads would be one of the more overt ways, especially since many women are told by their employers that if they don't go they'll lose their jobs). As psychologist Mary Wade writes: "Women do not frequently make requests for themselves, because they have learned that they may ultimately lose more than they gain. . . . Women have learned their social normative lessons all too well."[14] Many women decide, in other words, that the gains to be had from asking for what they want are not worth the price they may have to pay.

In this chapter, we look broadly at society's double standard for judging the behavior of men and women in order to understand why women frequently feel punished for asking for what they want. We examine some of the constraints society places on women's behavior—constraints that have persuaded many women that asking is not an effective strategy for achieving their goals. We then look at ways for women to ask for and get what they want without provoking hostile responses. And we look at ways in which society can change to make "asking" by women more permissible and effective.

The Likeability Factor

For women who want to influence other people, research has found that being *likeable* is critically important—and that women's influence increases the more they are liked. Since negotiation is all about trying to influence people, this means that women must be likeable in order to negotiate successfully. You might think that women also need to be assertive to negotiate successfully—able to present strong arguments, defend their interests and positions, and communicate confidence in their points of view. Unfortunately, research has revealed that assertive women are less well-liked than those who are not assertive.[15] This means that an assertive woman, no matter how well she presents her arguments in a negotiation, risks decreasing her likeability and therefore her ability to influence the other side to agree with her point of view. In contrast, whether or not they are liked does not affect men's ability to influence others, and there is no connection between assertive behavior and likeability for men. Men are equally well liked whether they are assertive or passive.[16]

This research is buttressed by studies showing that women are penalized far more than men for boasting.[17] In one study, researchers gave a group of students a "boasting" statement and another group a "nonboasting" statement. Some members of each group were told that the statement they'd received had been made by a man and some were told it had been made by a woman. They were all asked to rate the "likeability" of the person who made their statement on a scale of one to seven. The researchers found that the likeability of men fell when they boasted, but that women's likeability fell much further—42 percent more.[18]

The special pressure on women to be likeable can sometimes discourage them from asking for anything at all. Adele, the retired financial consultant, said she was raised to believe that being liked is of paramount importance for a woman. Afraid she would be disliked if she pressed for what she wanted, she would "never negotiate for anything" and taught herself to "ask for things very covertly." Melissa, 39, a social worker, said that in any type of negotiation, regardless of whom she's negotiating with, she's likely to ask for less than she really wants because her primary concern is for the other person to like her: "It sounds really kind of silly, but I don't want to ruin it somehow by being demanding in some way. And not being liked is something that's hard for me, and so I think that sometimes, if I feel like people are going to think, 'Oh, she's demanding,' I don't know—it's hard. Because . . . I want to fit into what they want."

The "likeability" issue can put women in a particularly tight bind, because self-confidence, assertiveness, and asking directly for what you want are often necessary to get ahead in the world. Consider, for example, situations involving hiring and promotion decisions. Since research has found that women are generally perceived to be less competent than men, women who compete against men in job situations need to counter this stereotype by demonstrating their superior capabilities.[19] Self-promotion (describing one's qualities and accomplishments) has been shown to enhance people's perceptions of one's competence.[20] But, as the psychologist Laurie Rudman writes, "self-promotion poses special problems for women." Although self-promotion may educate a woman's superiors about her qualifications, it may make her less likeable—and make her superiors less inclined to give her what she wants. As

Rudman writes, "women may be stuck in a Catch-22 in which they are damned if they do self-promote and damned if they do not."[21]

Other studies have shown that men (and sometimes women) react negatively when women adopt styles or communication patterns expected of men, such as acting assertive and self-confident rather than tentative.[22] But research also shows that women fare no better if they don't self-promote because men judge women who restrict themselves to more gender-appropriate behavior as less capable and "unsuited to management."[23]

Marcela, 48, a nuclear engineer, described a supervisor who gave her "feedback at a rating session that I was indecisive or too hesitant, which I thought was complete bologna because I don't see myself that way at all and I don't think that anybody else does either. That was just his perception and it was definitely a male/female thing. We had completely opposite styles of everything and I hated working for him, absolutely hated it!" In other words, using more "feminine" styles or communication patterns often won't get women what they want either, especially when what they want is to be given management responsibilities and the opportunity to rise into the higher levels of their organizations.[24]

Style and Prejudice

Recent research on leadership by Alice Eagly, Mona Makhijani, and Bruce Klonsky confirms that we require different behavior from women in leadership roles than we require from men: Men are judged to be equally effective as leaders whether they use autocratic or democratic leadership styles, but women who use autocratic styles are judged less favorably than women who use democratic styles.[25] Sadly, women managers or "leaders" can be penalized for violating role expectations even when they steer a careful course between the extremes of masculine and feminine styles of behavior. In one study, researchers formed students into groups of four to rank the value of nine items (such as a first-aid kit and a map) to someone who has crashed on the moon. Each group included a confederate of the researchers (either male or female) who was trained to play the role of a cooperative, pleasantly assertive group leader. As each group ranked the items, researchers observed the facial expressions of the "nonconfederates" in response to the behavior of the confederate leaders.

The researchers found that the students responded very differently to identical behavior by men and women. Males playing the leadership roles elicited more positive than negative facial reactions but females playing leadership roles prompted the opposite response—more negative than positive reactions. The researchers later asked the participants to evaluate the personal attributes of the leaders in their groups. Across the board, they rated males who had taken leadership positions as having more ability, skill, and intelligence than the female leaders and rated the females leaders as more emotional, bossy, and domineering—this despite the fact that the behavior of the men and women playing leadership roles was exactly the same. However, when the participants were asked directly about their attitudes toward men and women in leadership roles, they exhibited no sex biases and believed that they held none.[26]

Researchers speculate that many people object to women playing leadership roles because their ideas about leadership behavior clash with their perceptions of how women should behave. To study this phenomenon, in the 1970s the psychologist Virginia Schein developed the Schein Descriptive Index, a list of 92 words and phrases commonly used to describe people's characteristics. Using this index, she looked at the correspondences between the characteristics people attribute to successful managers and the characteristics they attribute to men and women. She found that people chose many more of the same words to describe both men and managers (such as assertive and ambitious) but very few of the same words to describe both women and managers.[27] Later research in the 1980s reached much the same conclusions.[28]

More recently, in the mid and late 1990s, researchers noticed that this correlation has begun to change for female subjects but not male subjects—women have begun to see the characteristics of managers as being similar to the characteristics of both men and women, while men continue to see managers and women as dissimilar.[29] A 1998 study showed that males in particular continue to hold extremely negative beliefs about females with senior professional standing. In this study, a group of undergraduates was given the Schein Descriptive Index and asked to identify words that describe female managers. Although female subjects chose words and phrases such as *able to separate feelings from ideas*, *competent*, *creative*, *emotionally stable*, *helpful*, *intelligent*, *objective*, *self-controlled*, *sympathetic*, and *well-informed* to describe female managers, male subjects chose terms such as *bitter*, *deceitful*, *easily influenced*, *frivolous*, *hasty*, *nervous*, *passive*, *quarrelsome*, and *uncertain*.[30] Research in Germany, the United Kingdom, China, and Japan has produced similar results. In each of these very different cultures, men see a high correspondence between the characteristics of men and the characteristics of managers—and little to no correspondence between the characteristics of women and the characteristics of managers.[31]

Taken together, these studies suggest that people's prejudices can powerfully influence the ways in which they respond to men and women without their realizing it. People may observe that a woman functions adequately or even extremely well according to objective measures—the number of billable hours she has worked or the number of clients she has brought in or the amounts of money she has raised—and still conclude that she lacks desirable personal attributes (she's not as likeable, or she's too emotional, bossy, and domineering, or she's too easily influenced, frivolous, and quarrelsome). This can be particularly problematic in an era, like our own, in which CEOs often become celebrities, as Rakesh Khurana, a professor of organizational behavior at the Harvard Business School, wrote in *Searching for a Corporate Savior: The Irrational Quest for Charismatic CEOs*. In this climate, writes Khurana, CEOs are "no longer defined as professional managers, but instead as leaders," with their ability to lead deriving largely from "their personal characteristics, or, more simply, their charisma."[32] In an atmosphere in which one's "personal characteristics" (pretty vague criteria) qualify or disqualify you for leadership roles, the subconscious prejudices people hold about women and their lack of fitness for management roles can translate into powerful deterrents when women ask to be considered for leadership positions.

As the psychologist Madeline Heilman writes, "Even when she produces the identical product as a man, a woman's work is often regarded as inferior" because often "women's achievements are viewed in a way that is consistent with stereotype-based negative performance expectations, and their work is devalued simply because they are women."[33] A woman may be told that she hasn't been promoted for vague reasons—she "needs more seasoning," "just isn't ready yet," or "needs to be a better team player." The woman may suspect that she has been unfairly evaluated, but because the criteria for evaluation are ambiguous, she can't prove it. She may conclude that something about her behavior has put her in the wrong—and that what put her in the wrong was asking to be promoted in the first place. This may make her reluctant to actively pursue advancement in the future.

Double Trouble

Other research shows that responses to women may be especially distorted by negative stereotypes when they work in areas in which there are few other women. Rosabeth Moss Kanter, in her influential 1977 book *Men and Women of the Corporation*, demonstrated that when women are tokens (when there aren't many of them around) their personal characteristics are more likely to be seen as similar to negative stereotypes about women's characteristics.[34] In a 1980 study, Madeline Heilman confirmed this finding by asking a group of MBAs to rate potential applicants for a hypothetical job. When less than 25 percent of the applicant pool was female, the MBAs rated female applicants lower (and also perceived them as more stereotypically feminine) than they did when larger percentages of the pool were female—showing that women are more likely to be devalued when their numbers are relatively small.[35]

This means that the higher a woman rises in an organization, the more likely she is to encounter stereotyped responses to her behavior—because there don't tend to be many women at the higher levels of most organizations. There are of course exceptions—highly visible and influential women who have achieved enormous success despite the persistent discouragement encountered by so many others. But these women *are* exceptions. A study by the economists Marianne Bertrand and Kevin Hallock, which looked at the top five highest-paid executives in firms of varying sizes between 1992 and 1997, found that women held only 2.5 percent of these posts.[36] In an article in *Fast Company* magazine, Margaret Heffernan, a former CEO at CMGI, an umbrella organization for several different Internet operating and development companies, described encountering a young woman in an elevator when she was at CMGI. After inquiring if she was indeed Margaret, the young woman said, "I just wanted to meet you and shake your hand. . . . I've never seen a female CEO before."[37] This was not 15 years ago, but in the year 2000, and this woman's experience, Heffernan points out, is not unusual. "Most men and women in business have never seen a female CEO—much less worked with one."[38]

Another problem women encounter is that the more power and status involved in a job, the more "masculine" the job is perceived to be—and therefore, as the Schein Index studies show, the less likely people are to see women's qualities as suitable for that work.[39] As a result, women may be perceived to be doing good work only as long as they are toiling away at less important jobs. Once they qualify for and start asking for more important, and therefore more "masculine," jobs, their work may begin to be devalued and their "personal style" may suddenly become a problem. This could explain why the women who are sent to the Bully Broads program usually hold high positions in their organizations—they're vice presidents, chief financial officers, and senior partners, all jobs that until recently were almost universally occupied by men. Presumably, for a long time these women were thought to be doing a good job, otherwise they wouldn't have been promoted again and again. But because the jobs they were doing were less important, they were less identified as "masculine" jobs—and their presence in those jobs posed less of a problem for their peers. Once they reached positions of significant power in their organizations, positions that are seen to be the province of men, their "style" became a problem.

Until she became CEO of Hewlett-Packard, a staunchly male company, Carly Fiorina's work was highly regarded. Then, all of a sudden, Fiorina's "style" became an issue. As Adam Lashinsky wrote in a November 2002 issue of *Fortune*: "Internally, rumors began to swirl. She had a personal trainer and personal hairdresser at her beck and call. She'd bought a new Gulfstream IV jet. She had her exercise equipment flown on a separate plane. She treated employees imperiously. None of this was true."[40] During the proxy fight that ensued when Fiorina decided to merge HP with Compaq, she was portrayed in the media "as a ruthless decision-maker—haughty and cocky."[41] Yet six months after the proxy fight was settled, Lashinsky followed her around for a few days and found her listening sympathetically to the concerns of a group of employees, teasing a sales manager and his boss, and getting an audience of "6000 sophisticated tech buyers eating out of her hand."[42] The impression conveyed is of an engaged and capable manager, not an arrogant, take-no-prisoners prima donna. Although one might conclude that Fiorina is smart enough to conceal her ruthlessness, hauteur, and cockiness when there's a reporter around, another interpretation also seems possible: that in the almost exclusively male world of proxy fights, where women hardly ever dare to tread, the ugly and inaccurate rumors about her behavior were provoked more by negative stereotypes aroused by her token status than by anything specific that she said or did.

Not Just Your Imagination

Although women may suspect that they've been the victims of negative attitudes toward women, they can rarely prove it and often have no recourse. But a few studies have at least confirmed that women's suspicions are correct. In one, the economist David Neumark sent men and women with equally impressive backgrounds and résumés to apply for jobs as wait staff in the upscale restaurants of Philadelphia. He found that women were 40 percent less likely to get called for interviews and 50 percent less likely to receive job offers if they did get interviews.[43] In an even more dramatic example, the economists Claudia Goldin and Cecilia Rouse looked at symphony orchestra auditions. They found that the use of a screen to hide the identity—and thus the gender—of auditioning musicians increased by a full 50 percent the probability that a woman would advance in the audition process. They also found that the likelihood that a woman would win an orchestra seat was increased by 250 percent when a screen was used. Goldin and Rouse credit the switch to blind auditions as a major factor in the gains women made in the top five U.S. symphonies between 1970, when women filled only 5 percent of the chairs, and the year 2000, when that number had grown to 25 percent.[44]

In *Why So Slow? The Advancement of Women*, Virginia Valian looked at earnings and advancement in six occupations—sports, law, medicine, business, academia, and engineering—and discovered that men earn more money and attain higher status than women in each of these professions. Although Valian conceded that many factors contribute to this "sex disparity in income and rank," she concluded that "gender always explains an additional portion. Women are required to meet a higher standard."[45] This requirement makes it harder for many women to ask for and get what they want as freely and fairly as they should. And given what we know about the "accumulation of disadvantage," this requirement represents a huge barrier to true gender equity.

The "C200 Business Leadership Index 2002," a publication of the Committee of 200, an organization of women in business, includes several statistics that support the theory that women frequently encounter roadblocks in conventional business environments. First, the number of women-owned businesses grew 14 percent between 1997 and 2001—twice as fast as all privately held businesses. Second, during the same period, the average size of women-owned businesses grew at the

extremely rapid rate of almost 17 percent a year, compared to 2 percent per year for all businesses. Noting that both of these rates of progress far outstrip gains in the percentage of female Fortune 500 corporate officers, the C200 Index observes that "this comparison indicates a greater ability of women to succeed outside the constraints of the corporate environment."[46] Although several factors probably contribute to this reality, the likelihood that subtle forms of sanctioning deter women's progress cannot be overlooked.

Even though much of the available data in this area can tell us only that a gender gap in earnings exists and not why, this we do know: Women as a group earn less than men, progress more slowly through the ranks of most businesses, and rarely rise as high. Looking at weekly earnings for full-time workers during the years 1994 to 1998, the economists Francine Blau and Lawrence Kahn, in a National Bureau of Economic Research publication, found this to be true not only in the United States, where women's earnings total only 76 percent of men's, but in Canada (where women make 70 percent of what men make), in Britain (75 percent), in Japan (64 percent), and in Australia (87 percent). The gap between the earnings of men and women is narrowest in Belgium, where women earn 90 percent of what men earn.[47] Researchers have yet to identify any country in which women's earnings equal or exceed men's. Using different data and looking at different occupations the answer is always the same—women are paid less.

Margaret Heffernan, the former CEO at CMGI, described her own experience of how gender can influence a woman's career in upper management—and limit how much she is paid—without her knowing it. "For years," Heffernan reported, "I was the only woman CEO at CMGI. But it wasn't until I read the company's proxy statement that I realized that my salary was 50 percent of that of my male counterparts. I had the CEO title, but I was being paid as if I were a director."[48]

When the Punishment Is Hard to Miss

Sanctions such as some of those described above may be difficult to pinpoint and attribute to gender. Women may suspect that they've been unfairly evaluated but can't prove it. They may feel generally discouraged from asking for what they want and yet be unable to say why. But sometimes the sanctioning—the punishment—is hard to miss.

Sandy, 41, a full-time mother who spent part of her career working as a commercial lending officer at a bank, told this story. The bank was interested in persuading an important customer (an aluminum smelting company) to borrow a large sum from the bank. Other banks were also courting the client, and competition was fierce. Sandy had worked with the president of the smelting company, a man in his fifties, for the past year, during which time he had treated her in a condescending manner—tolerating her requests for information but making it clear that he was not happy to be working with her. When Sandy brought up the subject of the big loan, however, he railed against her and said he would not talk to a woman about his business needs. Women were not "business material," he shouted, and he would terminate his relationship with the bank if she were not replaced with a man.

Sandy returned to the bank and described the meeting to her boss, a man in his early thirties, and to his boss, a man in his early forties. Both said they supported Sandy and offered to meet with the smelting company president and sort out the problem. At this meeting, with Sandy present, the president of the smelting company repeated his request that she be replaced in a loud, verbally abusive manner. Sandy said, "I don't recall if he called me a whore, but I wouldn't be surprised if he did because I was so utterly shocked by his behavior—it seemed suited to a back alley brawl!" The two bank managers immediately buckled to his request and said she would be replaced. Afterward, they refused to explain their behavior. Sandy was punished—not merely taken off this important account, but insulted and humiliated without protest from her superiors—simply for asking this man to do business with her. From his point of view, it was outrageous for her to think she could perform an important job, a job that he thought should therefore be a man's job. Sandy observed that "this experience fit into a general prejudice that I had against men in the workplace—that their attitudes and perceptions of women made it difficult to ask for what was fair and right. I definitely had difficulty with the men I knew at the bank in asking for what I felt was fair for me."

The punishment for venturing into "masculine" jobs can be equally severe at the other end of the social spectrum, in blue-collar fields that have long been male-dominated. The journalist Susan Faludi, in *Backlash: The Undeclared War against American Women*, reports the experiences of Diane Joyce, a widow raising four children on her own. Joyce landed a job on a Santa Clara, California, county road crew, coming in third out of 87 applicants on the job test.[49] When she showed up for

work, the experienced drivers of the county's bobtail trucks who were supposed to train her gave her unclear, conflicting, and at one point dangerous instructions; her supervisor refused to issue her a pair of coveralls (she had to file a formal grievance to get them); and her co-workers kept the ladies' room locked. "You wanted a man's job, you learn to pee like a man," her supervisor told her.[50] Obscene graffiti about her appeared on the sides of trucks, and men in the department screamed at her to "go the hell away."[51] When Joyce later applied for a more senior road dispatcher's job, they gave it to a man with three years' less experience. She complained and got the job, but the man who lost it sued for reverse discrimination—and pursued the case all the way to the Supreme Court. He lost at every juncture, but this didn't stop Joyce's coworkers from continuing to harass her.

Faludi writes, "Joyce's experience was typical of the forthright and often violent backlash within the blue-collar workforce. . . . At a construction site in New York . . . the men took a woman's work boots and hacked them to bits. Another woman was injured by a male co-worker; he hit her on the head with a two-by-four. In Santa Clara County . . . the county's equal opportunity files were stuffed with reports of ostracism, hazing, sexual harassment, threats, verbal and physical abuse."[52]

Professor of management Judy Rosener offers this explanation for the intensity of men's resistance to seeing women move into realms that have traditionally been male: "The glass ceiling for those below it is the floor for those above it. When we take away our ceiling, we take away their floor, and they have a fear of falling."[53] As a result, high-powered women who are too self-assertive are sent to programs such as "Bully Broads," women working at middle levels of management are paid less and promoted more slowly than their male peers, and blue-collar women are threatened, ostracized, and undermined in their efforts to perform their jobs. All of these forms of punishment discourage women from asking for the same things men want and get and enjoy, whether that is attaining high levels of success in their fields, getting paid the same as their peers, or simply being allowed to do the jobs they want to do.

Although our interviews produced numerous stories of "punishment" similar to those included here, overt sanctioning of this sort has rarely been the topic of systematic analysis, in part because it is less likely to emerge in the bright light of the laboratory. This is especially true because so much research is performed on college campuses, where the populations available for study are particularly sensitive to issues of "political correctness" and have learned to refrain from voicing or acting out their prejudices. But even though many members of our society have become more cautious about expressing their prejudices, this doesn't mean those prejudices have ceased to influence their actions.

Danger! Danger!—The Message Is Everywhere

Even women who have themselves escaped overt forms of punishment for pursuing their ambitions cannot ignore the messages from every side that it's risky for women to try to become too successful. Susan Faludi argues that this is because for many people the core meaning of masculinity is threatened by the improved economic status of women. This view is supported by the results of a 1989 poll, in which most people (men and women) defined masculinity as "being a good provider for your family."[54] One of our society's strongest gender norms for women, in contrast, is that they will be modest and selfless. As a result, many people don't consider being preoccupied by money or attaching a dollar value to their work and time to be proper or attractive for a woman.[55]

Linda Evangelista, one of the first models to be identified as a "supermodel," earned an avalanche of derision in the summer of 1990 when she admitted to a reporter that she and Christy Turlington, another "supermodel," had an expression they liked to use: "We don't wake up for less than $10,000 a day." Loudly denounced at the time, she has been dogged by the remark ever since. As recently as the September 2001 edition of *Vogue*, an interviewer pressed her again to explain her remark. Evangelista said, "I feel like those words are going to be engraved on my tombstone. . . . I apologized for it. I acknowledged it. . . . Would I hope that I would never say something like that ever again? Yes." Keep in mind that Evangelista made this remark in 1990, after a decade (the 1980s) in which everyone from Donald Trump to Michael Milken boasted of his huge income on television talk shows, in the society pages, and in the financial news—a decade in which accumulating wealth and flaunting it amounted to a national obsession. But Evangelista's story tells us that what is good for the gander is *not* good for the goose. When a woman knows what she's worth—and feels proud of her abilities and of what she can earn—she sets herself up to be scorned and chastised.

Caring more about relationships than about personal gain represents another powerful gender norm for women. The media's treatment of an episode at the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City provided an object lesson for women on the dangers of violating this norm. Jean Racine, considered the top female bobsled driver in the world and the Olympic front-runner for the American women's bobsledding team, spent most of her career partnered with a friend (many media sources said her "best friend"), Jen Davidson. Racine and Davidson competed in the two-person version of the sport, in which one athlete, the driver, sits in front and steers while the other, the brakewoman, pushes from behind to get the sled started down the course and then stops the sled at the bottom. Brakewomen need to be very strong. Racine was the driver and Davidson the brakewoman until two months before the games. Then, feeling that Davidson was not as strong as another player, Racine switched partners—or, as the media reported it, "dumped" Davidson. Shortly before the games, Racine's new partner, Gea Johnson, suffered a hamstring injury, and Racine tried switching partners again, this time asking a relative newcomer, Vonetta Flowers, to join her. Flowers turned Racine down and with her partner, Jill Bakken, eventually won the gold medal. Racine and the injured Gea Johnson did not perform well and failed to win a medal.

This story was widely covered, with everyone from the *New York Times* to *USA Today* to the supermarket tabloids and both network and cable news programs weighing in with their judgments. The reporting, for the most part, reduced this story of personal struggle, hard choices, and disappointment to the realm of soap opera, a trivial squabble among women, with even such august news bodies as NBC dubbing the episode "As the Sled Turns." No one claimed that Jen Davidson was faster than the other brakewomen who made the U.S. team, and a few news sources even conceded that switching partners is extremely common in the sport, among male bobsledders as well as female. Nonetheless, press reports described Racine as "ruthless" and "without remorse," referred to her behavior as "scandalous" and "appalling," and implied that she deserved to lose because she had put her own interests above the claims of friendship. Flowers, on the other hand, deserved to win because she'd been loyal. "Perhaps warmth and sweetness have their place in the cutthroat world of Olympic bobsledding. Loyalty does, at least," wrote the *New York Times*'s reporter.[56]

The thing is: Jean Racine was an Olympic-caliber athlete. Like any athlete, her chances to compete in the Olympics were limited, and she wanted to win. That's what the Olympics are about, after all. And she put her personal ambition and desire—she put what she wanted—ahead of relationship concerns, a major taboo for a woman. For this, she was publicly lambasted. The message to women: If trying to get what you want means violating gender norms for women, don't do it. You may not get what you want, and on top of that disappointment you'll be roundly criticized and publicly shamed.

Faludi believes that men, and many women, combat their fear that masculinity is threatened by women's success by trying to shift the "cultural gears" into reverse. They do this by promoting the idea that the movement of women into the workplace is responsible for many of society's problems, especially those involving families and children.[57] So the media publishes stories with titles like "Feminism Is Bad for Women's Health Care" (from the *Wall Street Journal*)[58] and conservative thinkers produce books such as *A Return to Modesty: Discovering the Lost Virtue*, by Wendy Shalit[59]; *Domestic Tranquility: A Brief against Feminism*, by F. Carolyn Graglia[60]; and *The War against Boys: How Misguided Feminism Is Harming Our Young Men*, by Christina Hoff Sommers.[61]

In demonizing feminists and telling women that they're responsible for society's problems, these reactionary forces teach businesses that it's permissible to penalize women for asking to do jobs typically performed by men—or simply for pursuing their own professional goals rather than deferring to the needs and ambitions of others. They can also make women feel less sure that it's okay for them to want what they want, especially if what they want involves professional success. This can persuade them to scale back their ambitions and to hope for—and ask for—fewer of life's rewards.

Women Have Learned Their Lessons Well

The oppressive but inescapable message—that women will be punished for exceeding the bounds of acceptable behavior—has come through loud and clear, and women have adapted their behavior accordingly.[62] Ariadne, 33, is an MBA who enjoyed a successful career in public relations before becoming a full-time mother. Ariadne has a very direct manner. Although she believes that a similarly direct man would be perceived as a "straight-shooter" or a "no-nonsense guy," her style has prompted people to call her a bitch or complain that she is too aggres-

sive. As a result, Ariadne learned in the course of her career to tone down her personal style and adopt a less straightforward manner. She would even avoid claiming credit for her own ideas (and asking for appropriate recognition) because she found that letting other people think her good ideas were their own helped get those ideas implemented, and backfired less on her.

An extensive body of research confirms that Ariadne's is not an isolated case: Women consistently adjust their behavior between private and public settings—revealing their clear understanding that they may pay a penalty for behaving freely when observed by others. Of course, both men and women behave differently in public than they do at home, but research shows that women adjust their behavior more. In one of the "pay allocation" experiments mentioned in chapter 2, for example, men and women were instructed to work on a task until they had "earned" four dollars. Although women worked longer and harder than men in the "private," unobserved condition (22 percent longer), they worked even longer if the amount of time they worked was monitored by the experimenter (52 percent longer than men). Men did not work longer when they were observed.[63] This tells us that women have learned that they must pay more attention than men to the impressions they make on others, presumably because they fear the penalties for counterstereotypical behavior.

Other research confirms that women conform more to gender roles in public than in private. In one study, researchers asked college students to estimate their grade-point averages (GPAs) for the upcoming semester either privately, on paper, or out loud to a peer. Although there were no gender differences between the male and female students' predictions in the private condition, the female students' estimates were lower in the presence of a peer (the males' estimates did not change).[64] A review of the research in this area concludes that unlike men, women "often limit their displays of achievement-oriented behavior to situations in which autonomy and privacy are assured."[65]

Women have learned, in other words, that asking through their actions to be recognized for their abilities and accomplishments can be a mistake. This self-consciousness about being observed extends to negotiation contexts, in which women request lower salaries when another person is present than they request when they assume no one else is watching. Men's requests, on the other hand, *increase* in the presence of another person.[66]

Do Not Compete

Women don't just modify their behavior in public settings, one study suggests, they may also shy away from competition, especially competition with men. For this study, three economists, Uri Gneezy, Muriel Niederle, and Aldo Rustichini, asked female and male engineering students to work through mazes on a computer. At first, the students worked on their own and were paid a flat rate for each maze they completed (the "piece-rate" condition). In this situation, men and women completed the same number of mazes on average. Then the researchers asked the same students to participate in a "tournament," in which three female students and three male students would compete to see who could complete the most mazes in a set amount of time. The winner would be paid six times as much for each maze solved as he or she had earned in the piece-rate condition, while the rest of the students would earn no money for their work.[67]

Traditional economic theory would expect every participant to complete more mazes in the tournament condition than in the piece-rate condition because the reward for winning would give everyone an incentive to work harder. But Gneezy, Niederle, and Rustichini found that this was true only of the men. Whereas men completed 34 percent more mazes during the tournaments than they'd solved in the piece-rate condition, the number of mazes the women solved did not increase. The men didn't suddenly get smarter—the tournament setting inspired them to compete with each other and try harder. But the tournament did not have the same impact on the women.

One might conclude from this study that women simply don't like to compete. To explore this hypothesis, the researchers organized additional tournaments in which they segregated the groups by gender. They found that the performance of the men in the all-male tournaments was identical to their performance in the mixed-gender tournaments: The incentive of "winning" prompted them to increase their efforts over the piece-rate condition by the same amount no matter who they were competing against. But the most revealing data emerged from the all-female tournaments: The women completed far more mazes in the all-female tournament groups than in either the piece-rate condition or in the tournaments in which they were competing against men.

One explanation for these uneven results could be that women believe that men are better at solving mazes than women. Assuming they

won't win in a mixed-gender tournament, they consequently don't try. Or stereotype threat may play a part: If women believe that men are better at solving mazes, this could undermine their performance at a subconscious level. Although the authors could not rule out these hypotheses, we can find nothing to suggest that mazes, which involve pretty basic skills, are in fact gender-defined and perceived to be the province of men. Another possible conclusion is that women just don't like competing against men. Much of what we know about gender norms supports this interpretation: Boys learn that they are expected to compete, that being a good competitor is a defining male trait. They also learn that they are expected to demonstrate superior ability over girls in certain areas (intelligence, physical prowess, business success) and that this superiority is central to our society's definition of maleness. Girls also learn these lessons about males. Because negotiation contains within it a basic form of competition, both males and females in our culture may make the connection that this consequently cannot be a woman's domain. To compete with a man in a negotiation and win—to get him to give you a better raise than he wanted, or a better price for a car, or more responsibility on a project than he intended—may threaten his socially received idea of his own maleness. And women learn that this is rarely a good idea, because such a destabilizing threat will almost inevitably rebound in negative ways, punishing the woman who posed it.

She may pay a price in her private life as well as at work. In *Creating A Life: Professional Women and the Quest for Children*, the economist Sylvia Ann Hewlett reports that "the more successful the woman, the less likely it is she will find a husband or bear a child."[68] Although many men scoff at the notion that they feel threatened by smart women or are less likely to date them, this phenomenon seems to persist. Two female Harvard MBA students interviewed on the television newsmagazine *60 Minutes* in 2002 confessed that they no longer admit to men that they go to Harvard, because men feel too threatened by their success to pursue relationships with them.[69]

The popular cable television series *Sex and the City*, about the personal lives of four New York career women (one of whom quits working to get married), illustrated this dilemma in one episode.[70] Miranda, one of the show's four principal characters, is a successful lawyer and a partner in her firm. Having observed that her career success frightens off many of the men she meets, Miranda pretends that she is a flight attendant to see if men will respond to her differently. This fiction, to her chagrin, turns out to be very successful: Men respond to her far more enthusiastically than before, concisely demonstrating the pressure women feel to downplay their accomplishments in order to protect men from being intimidated—and to protect their own chances of establishing relationships with them.

Marcela, the nuclear engineer, described how she learned this lesson. When she was growing up, she said, "girls being smart was definitely an issue; when you were in your dating years the whole thing was not to let the guys know how smart you were. Because if they ever found out that your SAT scores were a lot higher than theirs then they wouldn't go out with you or whatever." She also said, "There was a point at which . . . I was told that I shouldn't be so obvious in my accomplishments." This lesson influences Marcela's professional behavior to this day. Periodically, she must write up an assessment of her abilities and accomplishments as part of her firm's "rating" process for awarding raises, bonuses, and promotions. Implicit in the process is the expectation that she will indicate what she feels she deserves for the work she has done—a form of asking. She hates doing this, she said, because she doesn't like "the kind of exercise where you have to either write about your contributions or your accomplishments. . . . Not because I don't think that I've accomplished anything or made contributions but because I don't like writing it down. It just makes me uncomfortable to have to self-promote. I'm not very comfortable being self-promoting."

Marcela knows, in private, that she has accomplished a great deal, but she's aware of the risks entailed in publicly acknowledging this. She also admitted that if she doesn't receive an award or a bonus that she feels she deserves, "I would never ask for it. If it wasn't freely given, I wouldn't ask for it. I might gripe about it at home, but that would be the extent of it."

Ways of Asking and Getting

Ellen, the senior partner at a law firm, told us that when she was a teenager, her father said to her: "Honey, you know you can't act like a tiger. You have to act like a kitten." His point was clear: To get what she wants, a woman can't be too aggressive or direct. Although society has changed in many ways since Ellen was a child, women still need to be careful about "coming on too strong." Fortunately, women can be careful and—some of the time—still get what they want. Recent re-

search has identified ways for women to be influential and effective without making themselves less likeable and bringing social sanctions down on their heads. This research has shown that for women, the key to safely and successfully exercising their influence is to be "nice." Like being likeable, being "nice" is expected of women—it's a gender norm requirement. To be "nice," a woman must seem friendly, act concerned about the needs and feelings of others, and avoid being confrontational. Several studies have demonstrated the efficacy of this approach for women.

The social psychologists Linda Carli, Suzanne LaFleur, and Christopher Lober videotaped male and female research assistants trying to persuade their peers to agree with a particular point of view—in this case, that it would be better not to make any changes in the cafeteria meal plan at their university (an unpopular opinion to hold). The researchers videotaped eight different versions of the same script, four with a man making the argument and four with a woman. The text and the message were the same in all eight versions, but the actors in the videos were coached to use different nonverbal behavior strategies in each: a "dominant style" (making constant eye contact, using a lot of hand gestures, speaking in a loud angry voice, and tightening their face muscles so that they appeared tense); a "submissive style" (avoiding eye contact, making nervous gestures with their hands, speaking in a soft unsteady voice, stammering and hesitating, slouching); a "task-oriented style" (frequently making eye contact, using only calm hand movements, speaking rapidly and with few hesitations); and a "social style" (leaning toward the audience, using unintrusive gestures, acting relaxed, communicating "friendliness and affiliation," smiling). After the researchers screened the videotapes for mixed male and female audiences, they asked them to rate how much they agreed with each speaker's point of view (this served as an overall measure of the speaker's ability to influence); they also asked them to rate each speaker on a number of qualities, such as how likeable, competent, and threatening he or she seemed.[71] The audiences found that male speakers were most influential when they used a "task-oriented style" (rather than any other style) but that a "social style" worked best for women.

Other research by the sociologist Cecilia Ridgeway supports this finding. Placing female confederates in mixed male and female groups that were instructed to make a series of decisions, she found that the women were most influential in the groups when they were "friendly, cooperative, confident, but nonconfrontational, and considerate."[72]

They were able to exert far less influence on the group's decision making when they acted merely self-confident and behaved in a self-interested way. This finding and the results of another study led Ridgeway to conclude: "Women seeking to assert authority can mitigate the legitimacy problems they face by combining their assertive, highly competent behaviors with positive social 'softeners.' . . . Using such techniques, highly competent women can overcome others' resistance and win influence and compliance. . . . The positive consequences of such techniques are not trivial. They allow very competent women to break through the maze of constraints created by gender status to wield authority. This begins to undermine the structural arrangements in society that support gender status beliefs."[73]

The psychologists Laurie Rudman and Peter Glick, in a study looking at hiring situations, produced similar results: Women were more likely to be hired when they paired competence with "communal" behavior (such as demonstrating an interest in the needs and challenges of those hiring them) than when they paired competence with more "agentic" behavior (such as focusing more on their own needs and ambitions).[74] As Rudman and Glick write, self-oriented or "agentic" women "are viewed as socially deficient, compared with identically presented men."[75] Being perceived as "socially deficient" may make a woman seem threatening. At the very least, it can make her seem less likeable and reduce her ability to influence others and get what she wants.

All of these studies tell us that when women go into a negotiation, in addition to arming themselves with information, ideas, and resolve, they must also bring along an arsenal of "friendly," nonthreatening social mannerisms; they must be prepared to be cooperative and interested in the needs of others; and they must avoid being confrontational.[76] This does not mean they need to back down or give in. Imagine that a woman who likes her job but feels underpaid receives a job offer from another company for more money. If she goes into her boss's office and says "I've received an offer for $xx,000 more and I'm going to take it if you don't match that salary," he may react badly to her direct approach and tell her to take the other job. Starting out with something like, "Hi, I need to talk to you about my salary; is now a good time?" can set a different tone for the negotiation. Demonstrating that she knows he has many demands on his time shows concern for him and his situation. If he agrees to talk, she could explain that she's been offered the other job and mention the salary that goes with it. Then she might say, "I

really enjoy working for you, but I have to consider this offer because it's for so much more money. You've always treated me fairly and I want to be fair to you by letting you know about this offer." She might also say that she'll stay if he matches the salary she's been offered. This will not only reinforce that she cares about the relationship, it will also frame the situation positively (she wants to stay) rather than posing it as a threat (she'll go if he doesn't meet her demands).

Although this approach can often produce better results, many women (including the two of us) may resent that women have to work so hard not to offend in this type of situation. As Ridgeway writes, "there is a price associated with such techniques as well: They inadvertently reaffirm gender stereotypes that require women to be 'nicer' than men in order to exercise equivalent power and authority."[77] Rudman and Glick also concede that this puts an extra burden on women: "Treading the fine line of appearing competent, ambitious, and competitive, but not at the expense of others, is a tall order. . . . To the extent that women have to maintain a 'bilingual' impression of themselves (as both nice and able) in order not to be perceived as overbearing and dominant, their situation is more difficult and tenuous in comparison to their male counterparts."[78]

The psychologist Janice Yoder goes further: "Relying on women themselves to compensate for structural inequities is inherently unfair, even to successful women, and makes less successful women vulnerable to self-blame and victim blaming from others."[79] Although this is undoubtedly true, more pragmatic scholars prefer to point to the positive aspects of these findings, which can, in fact, help women. Social psychologist Linda Carli argues that more friendly, social behaviors need not be seen as expressing weakness or an excessive desire to please since studies show that communal behaviors (such as smiling) do not suggest low status.[80] She believes that pairing assertive and communal behaviors can allow women to become more successful and that these behaviors can be a source of real power. And while earlier research has suggested that acting tentative, apologetic, and uncertain (the Bully Broads approach) can also reduce the threat competent women pose in male domains, this type of behavior has the negative side-effect of making women appear less competent.[81] Using a friendly, social style provides a more attractive alternative, since it minimizes the threat posed by a woman in a leadership role while still communicating competence and self-confidence.

Whether or not this advice seems offensive or useful, it appears that successful women have taken heed. Research on the leadership styles of men and women has found that highly successful women do employ more communal types of behavior and a softer style than equally successful men.[82] An article in the June 10, 2002, issue of *Fortune* provides a good example of a woman whose social style has clearly helped her gain great power and influence in her field. The article, about the stock research firm Sanford C. Bernstein, described the personal style of the firm's then-chair and CEO, Sally Krawcheck, 37. Sanford C. Bernstein was famous for making tough calls and never pulling its punches. Bernstein would downgrade a stock every other firm was promoting and put out "buy" recommendations on stocks no one else wanted to touch. And the firm had an excellent track record for making good calls, which turns out to be unusual for securities analysts. How did Krawcheck succeed in running such a hard-hitting, uncompromising enterprise without suffering the punishment many women encounter for rising too high in their professions? What allowed her to become such an effective leader in a male-dominated field without being called a bitch or being sent to Bully Broads? Explained writer David Rynecki: "She has a gracious, refined manner that masks her toughness."[83]

Smart Women, Smart Choices

How can the information we've presented in this chapter help women ensure that their work is fairly evaluated and free them to pursue their professional and personal ambitions without fear of punishment? We see three courses.

The first and perhaps most obvious is for women to start their own businesses. As the C200 Index figures demonstrated, many women have already given up trying to get fair treatment in conventional business settings and have decided to strike out on their own.

A second possibility is for women who work in male-dominated industries or organizations to do everything they can to reduce their token status: recruiting other women to their fields and their firms; mentoring younger women and helping them rise to higher levels; and working actively to build networks of women that can provide the same benefits men's networks have traditionally provided. These include serving as conduits for information, providing opportunities to establish

strong relationships with peers in related fields, and creating sources of mutual support.

The third course involves choosing wisely. Women can seek out firms where a lot of women already do what they want to do. Even in occupations that are mostly male-dominated, some firms will have more women performing those functions than others. Research has shown that a "lifting of sanctions" begins to occur when the percentage of women in a particular environment reaches about 15 percent; when 35 to 40 percent of the people in a given environment are women, the range of behaviors allowed to women widens considerably and the environment can actually become quite hospitable to women.[84] Women can also choose firms with an organizational culture that supports female advancement, discourages stereotyping, and maintains an open and well-structured system for evaluating people.

A well-structured evaluation system is particularly key, and several aspects of how a firm evaluates its people can make a big difference for women. First, women fare better when an evaluation process is more structured, includes clearly understood benchmarks, and is less open to subjective judgments.[85] A situation in which everyone at a particular level, in a particular group, or performing a particular function must meet similar performance benchmarks can work very well for women, for example. Second, women do better and suffer less harm from negative stereotypes about their competence when they are evaluated for their individual work products rather than for their contributions to the work of a team. When a team performs well or achieves a high level of productivity, evaluators can attribute the team's good performance to any one of the team members—and a woman on the team is least likely to be seen as responsible for the group's success.[86]

Choosing wisely also involves feeling entitled to "shop" for a job by doing plenty of research before you decide where to apply—and then asking questions during the application and interview process. In a "Careers" column in *Fortune*, Matthew Boyle offers this advice: "The first step, often overlooked, is to find out what suits you. . . . Then it's time to find out who offers that specific environment." Once you've done this much legwork and you're considering a particular company, Boyle says "ask how you'll be evaluated." He quotes Thomas Tierney, former CEO of Bain & Co., who said "It's amazing how many people don't ask that. . . . You're going to sign up for a game and not know how the score is kept?"[87]

Transforming the Context

We don't mean to suggest that only women need to change. As a society, as managers and coworkers and clients and friends, we all need to examine our responses to women when they behave in ways more typically thought of as "masculine." Managers, in particular, need to recognize that stereotypes can influence how they evaluate people without their knowing it. They need to take strong steps to prevent this from happening when women are performing jobs that have traditionally been performed by men or when the proportion of women doing a particular job is very small. They need to establish transparent evaluation processes and criteria that minimize the impact of subjective responses in performance evaluations. By teaching themselves to react differently to women who assert themselves, and consistently applying fixed and well-known standards to the work of everyone they supervise, male or female, managers will free women to promote their own interests without censure or blame. Doing so will help them retain talented employees in whom their firms have invested substantial resources. But they shouldn't do it just because it's good business. As a result of the courage and persistence of one woman, it's also now the law.

In 1982, Ann Hopkins was the only woman out of 88 people being considered for partner at the accounting firm Price Waterhouse. Hopkins had brought in $25 million in business and billed more hours that year than any of the 87 men, yet she was rejected for partner. "Her style was assertive, task-oriented, and instrumental," writes Virginia Valian. "She had all the qualities that gender schemas dictate successful men should have. Her problem was that she wasn't a man."[88] Hopkins sued, pressed her case all the way to the Supreme Court, and won each time. Instrumental in the case was the testimony of Susan Fiske, a research psychologist and expert on how stereotypes can influence people's judgment. Relying on Fiske's testimony and on an *amicus curiae* (friend of the court) brief filed by the American Psychological Association, the Supreme Court wrote:

> In the specific context of sex stereotyping, an employer who acts on the basis of a belief that a woman cannot be aggressive, or that she must not be, has acted on the basis of gender. . . . We are beyond the day when an employer could evaluate employees by assuming or insisting that they matched the stereotype associated with their

> group. . . . An employer who objects to aggressiveness in women but whose positions require this trait places women in an intolerable Catch 22: out of a job if they behave aggressively and out of a job if they don't. Title VII lifts women out of this bind.[89]

In other words, it is now illegal for "women who do not have a 'soft, genteel way' about them" to be told "that they should wear more make-up and go to charm school." (This is what Ann Hopkins's supervisors said when they rejected her bid for a partnership.)[90]

Although Hopkins had the self-confidence to fight for what she had earned, and changed the law in the process, many women prefer to avoid this kind of struggle and instead back away from asking for what they've rightly earned. The very real risks involved in displaying their competence, trying to ensure that their work is fairly evaluated, and promoting their own ambitions can cause many women so much anxiety that they choose instead to avoid negotiation altogether. We look at the sometimes crippling impact of anxiety on women's reluctance to ask for what they want in the next chapter.